



MECKLENBURG COUNTY
North Carolina

Promoting Mecklenburg County

Mecklenburg County Government

Public Information Department

Department Director - Daniel Diehl



Our mission is to **Tell Mecklenburg County's Story** and be the go-to, trusted source of County information

Promoting Mecklenburg County

Promotions cover all communication channels--from word of mouth to the web, social media and paid marketing and advertising.

Presentation Agenda:

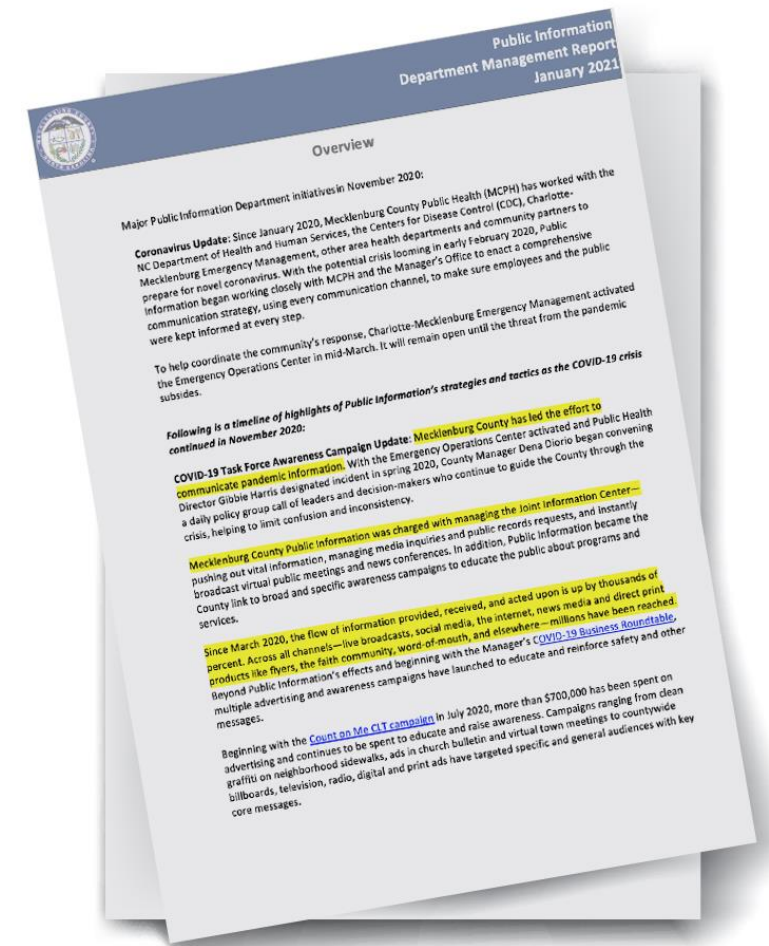
- Public Information resources and responsibilities
- Current, ongoing improvements to Board meetings and County communication channels
- Recommendations for additional promotion improvements

Public Information Resources and Responsibilities

Our Monthly Report details the effectiveness of our current communications initiatives.

Covid-19 Awareness Campaign:

- Mecklenburg County has led the effort to communicate pandemic information.
- PI is charged with managing the Joint Information Center.
- Since March 2020, the flow of information provided, received, and responded to is up by thousands of percent.
- Across all channels - live broadcasts, social media, the internet, news media and direct print products, the faith community, word-of-mouth, and elsewhere - millions have been reached.



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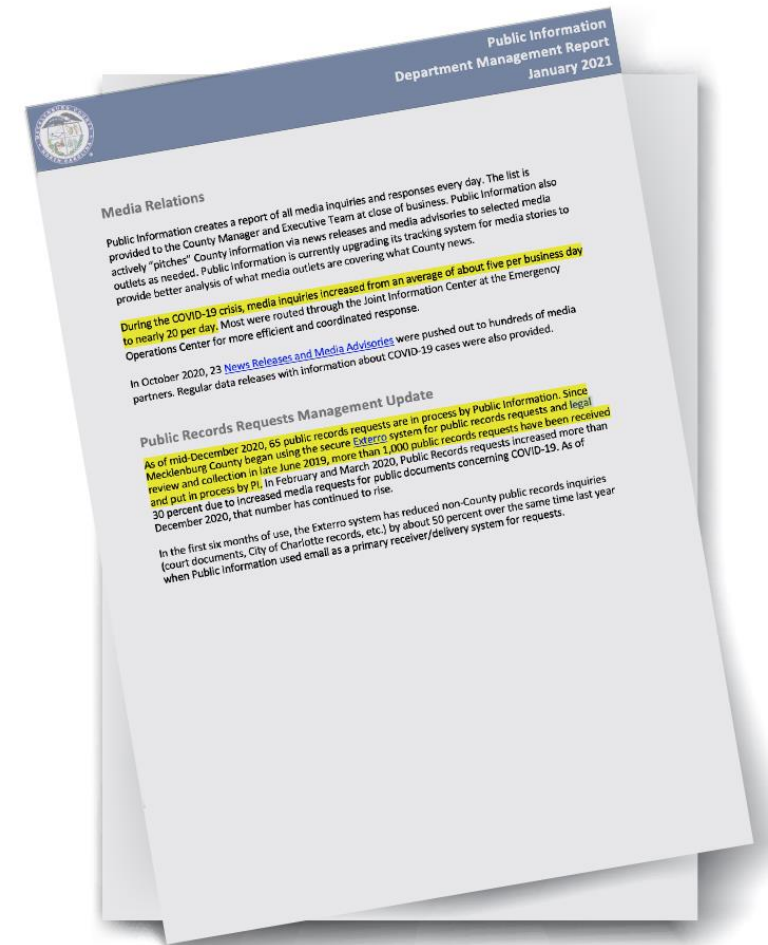


Public Information Resources and Responsibilities

Our Monthly Report details the effectiveness of our current communications initiatives.

Media Relations Snapshot:

- During the COVID-19 crisis, media inquiries increased from an average of about **five** per business day to nearly **20** per day.
- As of mid-December 2020, 65 public records requests are in process by Public Information.
- Since Mecklenburg County began using the secure [Exterro](#) system for public records requests in late June 2019, more than **1,000** public records requests have been received and put in process.



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Public Information Resources and Responsibilities

Our Monthly Report details the effectiveness of our current communications initiatives.

Social Media Snapshot:

Mecklenburg County Social Media for November 2020

- Acquired 1,037 total followers
- Sent 223 messages
- Received 2,451 messages
- Generated 1,185,727 total impressions
- 50,465 total engagements
- 1,118 Twitter viewers for a single November BOCC meeting broadcast.

Since 2009 we have logged more than 20,000 Tweets and recently surpassed 75,000 followers.



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Public Information Department

Public Information Resources and Responsibilities

- **Web Services**
MeckNC.gov, MeckWeb.
- **Social Media**
Verified accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.
- **Public Information Officers**
Each of five PIOs manage a portfolio of departments, provide communication consulting, plans, writing, media relations, etc.
- **Digital Producers**
Video, photography, animation, live meetings, news conferences, and public record requests.
- **Community Relations**
Public Engagement, community meetings, engagement with marginalized communities.



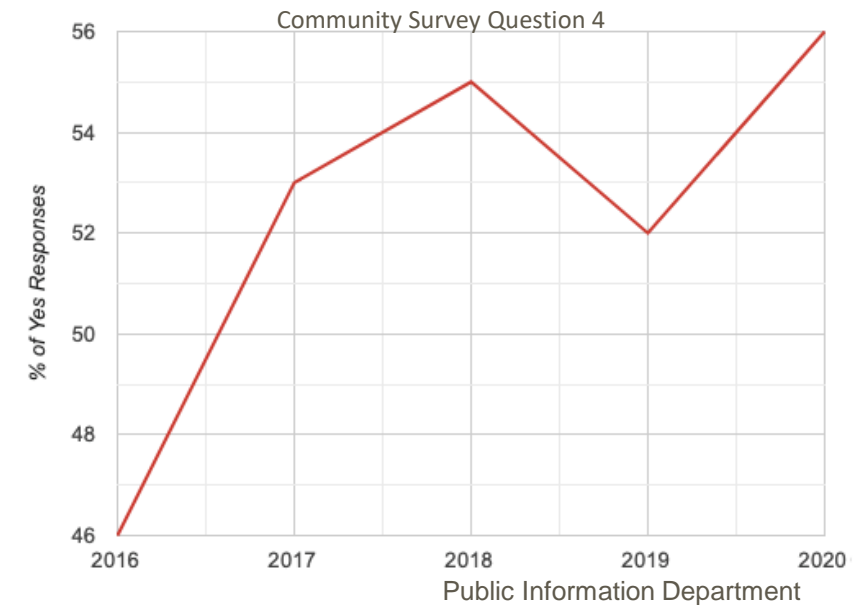
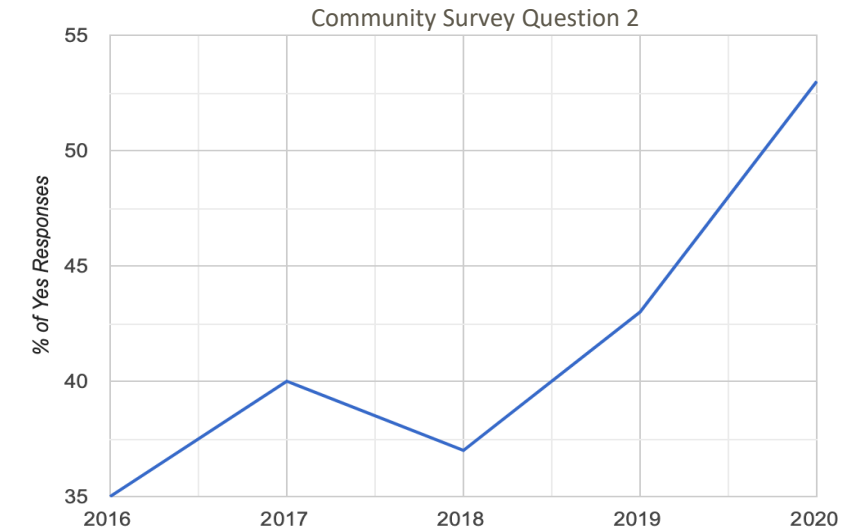
Community Survey and Employee Climate Survey

Community Survey

- Does Mecklenburg County do a good job communicating?
 - 53% of respondents said “Yes,” a 9% improvement from 2019.
- Do you consider Mecklenburg County to be open and transparent?
 - 56% of respondents said “Yes,” 4% improvement from 2019.

Employee Climate Survey

- 94% of County employees responded that MeckWeb pages (the County's intranet site) provide me with useful information.



Marketing, Advertising and Promotions

- Dozens of marketing and paid promotion campaigns occur each year.
- County channels used to promote as much as PI *capacity* allows.
- Paid campaigns are managed by departments using their own funding.
 - Can lead to inconsistency, increased costs, competition among County programs.
 - 2019 OMB audit says at least \$1.2m yearly average spent on paid advertising
- PI helps with limited number of campaigns.
 - 2019 Revaluation, Count on Me CLT, the Budget Survey.
 - PI does not do not control campaigns.



Helping the Board Tell Our Story

Mecklenburg County's story starts with BOCC decisions.

First recommendation is to continue improving the Board meetings and help you increase awareness and promote programs.

- Create easy-to-share content.
- Continue making meeting improvements.



MECK Pre-K is a FREE County-funded program available to eligible children and taught by licensed teachers and assistants.



Helping the Board Tell Our Story

Improvements made to BOCC meetings in 2020 include:

- Added qualified ASL interpreters to every live meeting to improve **ADA** effective communication compliance.
- Offer live Spanish language translations to all meeting broadcasts to improve outreach to the Spanish-speaking community.
- Video streams rebroadcast in more than 60 languages.
- Mecklenburg Minute video feature highlights Board decisions for those unable to watch meetings.



Helping the Board Tell Our Story

- Board meeting viewership across all platforms has dramatically increased in the last several months.
 - **Online viewership** increased 227% *and* 35,000 new viewers added in 2020.
- To take advantage of that momentum, we also suggest:
 - Add another monthly **Mecklenburg Minute** that focuses on a specific district.
 - Tells the stories of the people who live there.
- Continue helping us.
 - Share our information with your networks.
 - Take advantage of the ***Commissioner Reports*** agenda item.
 - Use the new tools we are developing.



Promotion Improvements

Countywide improvements – New tools

- Branding – New standards on the way.
- MeckNC.gov – Website redesign and upgrade.
- Digital Billboard – Adding a 98' x 58' digital billboard to the courthouse parking deck with rotating messages.

Countywide improvements -- Ongoing efforts

- Social Media - Continue successful strategy to extend reach and remain the most reliable source for County information.
- Marketing/Advertising - Consistently apply the new brand guidelines to campaigns to build recognition and awareness.
- Media Relations - Maintain and build on trust, transparency and strong professional relationships.



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New Recommendations

Develop a recognizable County logo to anchor our new brand.

- The seal has been the County's only symbol since the 1960s.
- With new branding guidelines and a redesigned website, it is the ideal time to create a logo to maximize exposure.

Create a PI Marketing Coordinator position.

- Manage all County advertising, marketing and promotion efforts.
- Ensures brand consistency and cross-promotion, and brokers better deals with agencies.
- Creates new opportunities for departments without a marketing budget.
- Brings strategies with measurable results for all campaigns and communications.
- Will unify promotion efforts between County departments, social media, web services, and community relations into a single, cohesive message.



New Recommendations

When PI has managed campaigns, they work.

- **2019 Revaluation** - Received international communication award for our campaign.
- **Count on Me CLT** - Blanketed the market with information about the 3w's starting in June. By August, our COVID-19 numbers were down.
- **Budget Survey** - PI involvement and promotion has resulted in triple-digit increases each year

PI campaign management has resulted in better branding, fewer vendors and better rates.



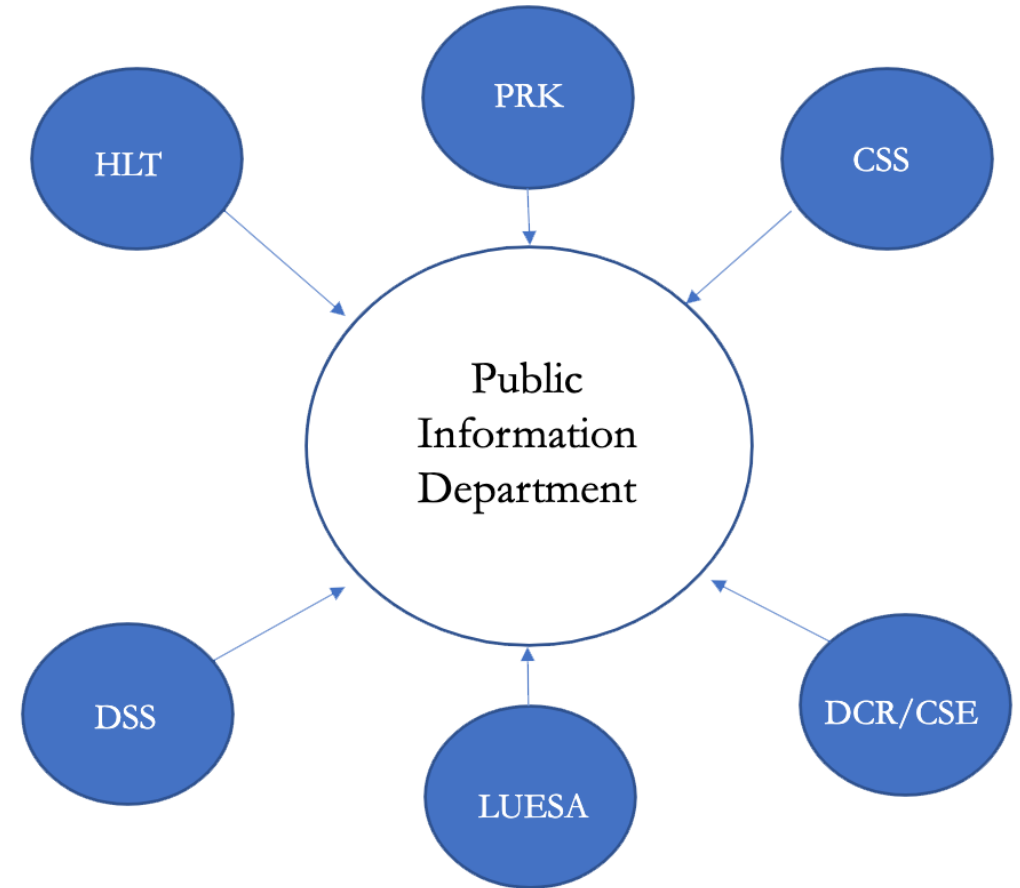
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OMB Needs Assessment Results

In 2019, OMB studied our communication and promotion efforts and came to the same conclusions.

OMB Recommendations:

- Creating a marketing team within PI
- Adding dedicated PIOs for larger departments such as PRK, HHS, HLT, and LUESA



Recommendations Summary

- Continue improving the Board meetings
- District-specific Mecklenburg Minute
- Hire fulltime Marketing Coordinator.
- Implement new branding standards with logo.
- Hire PIOs to work directly with each large department.
- Continue community relations efforts to engage marginalized communities.



PI creating promotions campaign

- Promotions campaign to help launch ideas.
- PI has created the first in a series of promotional videos for our work to respond to the pandemic.



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Thank you & Questions

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